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SOUTH AFRICA.

REPORT ON AGRICULTURE AND VITICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY

LORD BLYTH.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
October, 1909.

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LORD BLYTH TO COLONIAL OFFICE.

London,
October, 1909.

MY LORD,

AT the invitation of the Government of Cape Colony I left England at the end of March last and visited that portion of our South African Possessions for the purpose of reporting upon agriculture in general and viticulture in particular.

I subsequently extended my visit to the other Colonies—the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, and Natal—in order to inquire into the present condition of their agriculture and the possibilities of its future development.

In all the Colonies I was afforded by the Governors and Prime Ministers every facility for acquiring such information as might enable me correctly to estimate the progress and prospects of South African agriculture.

The wine-growing industry of South Africa, which is confined almost entirely to the Cape Colony, I have dealt with in a separate report which I handed to the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable John X. Merriman, previous to my departure from Cape Town, a copy of which I annex hereto for your Lordship's information.

The Unification of South Africa.—My visit coincided with perhaps the most momentous political event in the history of South Africa, viz., the unification of the four Colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange Free State into the South African Union—to be followed, it is to be hoped, by the inclusion of Rhodesia. I do not wish to trouble you upon this important Imperial subject, beyond confirming, as far as my own observation goes, everything that has been so well stated publicly during the past few months by competent observers who have visited South Africa, with regard to the self-sacrificing spirit shown by Colonial statesmen and all parties of both nationalities in sinking differences, and in letting bygones be bygones, in the common desire to create a united, peaceful, and progressive South Africa.

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State of Agriculture.—Previously to the war, agriculture, notwithstanding the efforts of individuals, had been in a quiescent if not a languishing state. This was no doubt owing to the whole thought and labour of the majority of the people who had flocked to that part of the world being attracted to the mining industries, which appeared to offer much larger and quicker opportunities of making money, and many people in England had consequently been led to believe that there must be something in the soil or climate of South Africa that was inimical to successful husbandry.

That the very opposite will, before long, prove to be the case my visit has shown me beyond question, and, instead of South Africa still remaining an importer of some of the chief necessaries of life, it seems almost certain that in a very few years a considerable proportion of the food-stuffs and fruits that are required for our teeming population at home will be obtained from that part of His Majesty's dominions.

Elements of National Stability.—Already, some years before the war, a few of the most successful and far-seeing merchants of South Africa had recognised that no country can attain full development and permanently remain great and prosperous if the income of its population is derived almost exclusively from the production of gold and diamonds, and when the wealth so obtained is principally spent in Europe, or, at least, outside its own birthplace. There are many evidences that Cecil Rhodes recognised this, and, from conversations I have had with some of those who were his colleagues and from the reports of his many friends amongst all parties still living, I am convinced that, had he been spared to witness the now almost completed dream of his life—the unification of South Africa—his marvellous energies, to no small extent, would have been directed to the development of agriculture as the surest guarantee for the permanent welfare of his adopted country.

Development before the War.—In comparing the position now with what it was at the close of the war, there is the possibility of injustice being done to the enterprise manifested before the outbreak of hostilities. I can well believe the statement that only those who saw the country before and immediately after the war can conceive the devastation that results from warfare. Not only was the cultivation of the land suspended, allowing the arable areas to lapse into a state of waste, but the herds and flocks were depleted in some parts to the verge of extinction; and after peace was restored it was more like beginning over again the process of agricultural development than building upon an old foundation.

Development since the War.—From what I was told on all sides as to the condition of the country at the conclusion of the war, I could hardly have believed possible the great strides towards full agricultural development which have been made in every direction, and, judging from what I saw, I am constrained to believe that the prospects of the future are most promising. Indeed, I go so far as to say that no country has ever made greater agricultural headway in so short a period

than has South Africa in the seven years since peace was proclaimed.

What has, in no small degree, contributed to the rapid extension of agriculture in South Africa, has been the great personal interest taken by one and all of the Governors of the four Colonies, who, following the excellent example set by His Majesty the King at home, have made it a point each season of attending the principal Agricultural Shows in their respective Colonies, and, besides offering prizes to successful competitors, giving the benefit of their advice and judgment in the purchase and proper management of all varieties of pedigree breeding-stock, farm produce, &c.; as well as periodically visiting and inspecting the Government Agricultural Schools and Experimental Stations. These representatives of the Crown seem to be fully recognising that, after all, agriculture is the soundest, because the most permanent, foundation on which the prosperity and well-being of a country can rest; and I was subsequently much impressed by the unanimity of opinion which seemed to prevail among the leading men of all parties, that no effort should be spared to promote the farming industry throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Government Aid.—Having been always myself a staunch advocate of generous and well-directed Government aid in the furtherance of agriculture, particularly in its initial stages, I was gratified to find that large pecuniary sacrifices in this direction are being made by the Governments of all the South African Colonies—sacrifices which are far greater in proportion than those ever made for the benefit of agriculture in England by the Home Government.

Private Generosity.—The extent of the contributions by private individuals also in South Africa towards agricultural development likewise struck me as most encouraging. I was especially impressed by the large amounts which wealthy men have bequeathed in the past, or are now spending during their life-time, with this object.

As an instance, I may mention that the late Mr. Alfred Beit left a large landed estate in the Transvaal, as well as £200,000 in money, for the purpose of founding a university or agricultural institution, the exact form of which has not yet been decided upon.

Government Efforts and Expenditure.—From the Premiers and Ministers of the four Colonies I learnt that their respective Governments are now directing special attention to the advancement of agriculture, and there are many successful residents in South Africa who, like Cecil Rhodes, have shown and are showing deep interest in rural pursuits by becoming landed proprietors or shareholders in land companies, and by supporting agricultural colleges and societies.

I was agreeably surprised to learn from General Botha, who is not only Premier but also Minister of Agriculture of the Transvaal, that in his State alone over a million sterling had been spent on agriculture since the war, and that sums exceeding £200,000 are now allocated annually for the advancement

of agriculture in this single Colony, being the same amount as our Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes for the first time, in his 1909-1910 Budget, to devote to agriculture and afforestation in the United Kingdom.

It is this large financial support of agricultural development by the Governments of the Colonies of South Africa that has been so effective and encouraging of late years, and which gives so much promise for the future. Indeed, few countries of the world, I should think, have allotted so large a proportion of their State revenues to the cause of agriculture as the four Colonies of the Cape, Orange Free State, Transvaal, and Natal have spent since the termination of the war. Evidently those in authority are convinced that the best hope of lasting prosperity is by the cultivation of the land *pari passu* with the development of the valuable mineral resources which lie beneath its surface.

Colleges and Experimental Stations.—The agricultural colleges and experimental stations of South Africa are features of great importance. Not only in or adjacent to the four capitals, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, and Pietermaritzburg, but also in or near several of the other large towns of the four Colonies, such as Potchefstroom in the Transvaal, Stellenbosch in Cape Colony, Tweespruit in the Orange Free State, and Cedara in Natal, as well as in Rhodesia, there have been established colleges, farming and horticulture stations, stud farms, and veterinary centres for bacteriological and other investigations. They appear to have enlisted all the best and most up-to-date scientific knowledge of the age for the use of the farmer, the breeder, and the public generally, and it can safely be said that, owing to the greater variety of soils and climate and to the large number of insect pests and other evils besetting the farming industry, our brethren in South Africa are qualified to teach us, rather than we them, at least some of the details of scientific agriculture and the application of preventive measures.

I had many instructive conversations with the managers and experts of these institutions, not only those from the United Kingdom and America, but others from many European countries—eminent men whose work cannot fail to produce remarkable results within a short period. The benefits from the labours of these scientists are becoming everywhere apparent, and, while every step is being taken to combat and exterminate the numerous diseases and plagues that affect vegetation in South Africa, every method also appears to be adopted in order to discover which plants and seeds are most suited to the diverse soils and climate of each Colony or district.

The Locust.—Most successful efforts have been made to exterminate the terrible pest of the locust which sometimes invades vast districts, and in a short time destroys entire crops. The maps exhibited in the agricultural schools at Pretoria show that, during the past three years, the locust-ravaged areas have been greatly diminished and the scientists who have made this pest their chief study are convinced that, when once the Union is established and the various Colonies and districts work as one

body, the damage from locusts will be reduced to a minimum; and that, at worst, there will only be an occasional invasion, even if those destructive insects cannot be entirely extirpated. At present, when the Colonies are not all working together, and any region neglects the necessary precaution of destroying the eggs or the larvæ, all the others are equally liable to suffer.

Agricultural Shows.—The Agricultural Shows of South Africa afford also great educational opportunities for all who directly or indirectly are interested in agriculture. There are large annual exhibitions illustrative of all farming operations, such as those of the Western Province Agricultural Society, the Port Elizabeth Society, the King William's Town Society, and the East London Society in Cape Colony; the Bloemfontein or Central Free State Agricultural Society in the Orange Free State; the Pretoria and Johannesburg Societies in the Transvaal; the Durban and Pietermaritzburg Societies in Natal; and the Salisbury and Bulawayo Societies in Rhodesia. Besides these principal exhibitions, there are Agricultural Shows in many of the smaller towns of each Colony, there being no less than some twenty held annually in Cape Colony alone.

Examples of Development.—Travelling for many scores of miles by rail or road through country where one hardly sees a tree or green blade of grass, one is inclined to think that the theory that every acre of ground has some special use can hardly apply in practice in South Africa. When, however, one visits a Government Farm, or private establishment like that of the Duke of Westminster in the Orange Free State, where the soil is precisely the same as that of the surrounding country, and observes the high state of cultivation to which the land has been brought; the large plantations of trees of considerable height, only a few years old; the luxuriant crops of different varieties of corn; the lucerne (which gives several cuttings in one year); and where, indeed,

> "grain and flower and fruit gush from the earth,"

one may confidently anticipate that the whole country will one day be covered with thriving homesteads.

Mining Attractions. — One reason, to which I have already alluded, why agriculture has remained so long under a cloud in South Africa, has been that most of the immigrants, for over a quarter of a century, whether English, Irish, Scottish, German, or of any other nationality, have been attracted to that part of the world mainly by the desire to participate, either directly or indirectly, in the dazzling pursuit of gold or diamonds.

Small Population.—But another and perhaps an equally important reason is that there has not been in the past a large population to feed, so that little demand for farm produce has existed in the country itself. Even to-day the population amounts to less than a million and a quarter of whites and about six millions of blacks in the whole of the vast territory of the South African Colonies and Dependencies, the area of which approaches a million and a quarter square miles, or nearly ten times the size of the United Kingdom.

Former Difficulty of Transport.—It was, therefore, manifestly not for consumption on the spot, but only for export, that it could have paid to produce large quantities of corn or fruit, while the almost overwhelming difficulties of transport to the sea-board had hitherto, in the absence of railways, and in most parts with only tracks for roads, made it virtually impossible that a remunerative export trade could be carried on.

Rainfall and Irrigation.—There has, further, been the great question of irrigation confronting the agriculturist in South Africa. Although it is commonly supposed that the possibilities of improving the producing capability of the country by means of irrigation have been recognised only within the past few years, the merits of the system had been appreciated and demonstrated long before the war. For example, the whole Oudtshoorn District was thoroughly irrigated before the close of last century, and the Irrigation Act, to which various important schemes are due, was passed as long ago as 1877. The recent developments, therefore, may be said to be enlargements of important departures instituted under the old *régime*.

It should be stated, however, that South Africa, unlike Egypt or India, does not suffer so much from a general lack of water as from want of proper means of storing it. The rainfall in many parts averages, as in England, from 25 to 30 inches a year. It is rarely, however, so evenly spread over the whole year as in this country, but comes down with great suddenness and in such extraordinary volume that a fall of as much as 5 to 6 inches in 24 hours is not uncommon. The bulk of the rain, therefore, finds its way into the water-courses and rivers, in some cases overflowing the banks of what are at other periods dry channels, and so passes away to the ocean, and, for the most part, is lost for the good purposes to which it might be applied.

Storing Water. — Very successful efforts have been made in certain places to store the water by means of dams or reservoirs, and most astonishing results have followed in the verdure and luxuriance that are at once visible in the surrounding crops. Indeed, there are few parts in this vast territory where water cannot be procured by some methods of boring or of storage, and science is gradually showing how it can be obtained more cheaply and abundantly.

To cite instances: Some 15 miles from Bloemfontein the municipality have erected within the last few years important waterworks, with most beneficial results. One or two farms situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the waterworks, which have a special dam to themselves, present the appearance of veritable oases. Water, however, for domestic purposes in the town of Bloemfontein, for which the waterworks were primarily built, is still extremely dear, costing no less than 5*s*. per thousand gallons, or some five times the average price paid in England. Water is, however, easily obtainable a few feet below the surface at certain seasons of the year in and around Bloemfontein, which, being the town where the final meeting was held, when 30 delegates, representing the four Colonies, unanimously agreed on

Unification, may most properly be known in the future as "The City of the Convention." The Experimental Farm of the Government of the Orange River Colony at Grootylei, about five miles outside Bloemfontein, is, for the most part, supplied with water from a series of wells some 30 feet deep.

The problem of water supply in many parts of the great territory of South Africa therefore appears, after all, to be that of storing the rain which Providence bestows, rather than that of bringing the water from great distances by artificial means.

In regard to this question of water supply and irrigation, it is well to notice that although the valuable report in 1901 of Sir William Willcocks demonstrated the great difficulties of the question, yet the practical suggestions made by him and by other experts, together with the general advance of scientific and mechanical knowledge since then, have combined to simplify, and in some measure to solve, this most important problem.

As a consequence of this advance in scientific knowledge, it may be mentioned that the Governments of all the four Colonies have of late devoted much attention to the subject of irrigation, and have encouraged the adoption of various methods of obtaining plentiful supplies of water by advancing money on loan for different periods at low rates of interest. I may here cite the case of some waterworks at Nuy, in the Worcester District of Cape Colony, recently opened by the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, for the supply of water to the promising farm lands of this locality, the cost of which was advanced by the Government, and is, as to both principal and interest, repayable in 45 years by equal annual instalments of 4½ per cent.

The Soil Responsive.—General de Wet, the Minister of Agriculture for the Orange Free State, observed to me, "One needs but to scratch the ground in this Colony, and it will bring forth crops abundantly"; and another gentlemen quaintly remarked, paraphrasing Sydney Smith, "Tickle the soil in South Africa and it smiles into a harvest"; but the agriculturist to "scratch" and "tickle" is still, to a large extent, lacking, and the chief drawback to South Africa's agricultural progress must therefore be that the population should continue so disproportionate to the gigantic territory. In Rhodesia alone there are 440,000 square miles of land (against 121,377 square miles in the United Kingdom), a large proportion without any cultivation whatever, while the population only numbers some 16,000 Europeans and a million and a half of coloured people.

Dry Farming.—In connection with the question of drought, it may be appropriate to refer to the recent developments in the direction of what is termed "Dry Farming." This system, which originated and has reached the highest point of attainment in the United States of America, and which is now receiving considerable attention in South Africa, consists in conserving by means of judicious cultivation and by the maintenance of a high percentage of organic matter the moisture in the soil. As already mentioned, South Africa has, in most parts a sufficient rainfall to render the land productive, provided it can be husbanded in the soil during the long intervals between

the rainy seasons. Irrigation is one means of overcoming the disadvantages of an irregular rainfall, but dry farming is often simpler and less expensive. Official publications state that in the arid regions of Western America extensive areas of land hitherto unproductive have been reclaimed and rendered profitable by the adoption of methods of cultivation to facilitate the absorption of rain and check the process of escape. The first point is to keep the surface in such a state of cultivation as will enable it to absorb as much as possible of the rainfall, and an important preliminary is to plough with as little delay as possible after the harvest has been gathered. But in arid climates moisture quickly escapes, either by percolation, *i.e.*, descent into the soil, or by capillary, *i.e.*, upward, movement to the surface and subsequent evaporation. The latter is the principal means of waste, and elaborate investigations, confirmed by practical experience in America, have demonstrated that capillarity can be checked by thorough surface cultivation. A layer of loose granular soil on the surface is an effective barrier to the upward movement of water, but the maintenance of a protective mulch involves harrowing after every rainfall. All the soils are not equally adapted to dry farming, as, for example, close-grained soils, such as clay and silt, are less amenable to the formation of a proper mulch than the looser sandy soils. The system is still imperfectly developed, but that it possesses great possibilities is shown by achievements in Kansas and other Western States where the yield of corn has been increased in exceptional seasons from 50 to 80 bushels per acre.

The Railway System.—The distance between the different towns in South Africa is apt to be lost sight of by us in England. Bloemfontein is 750 miles, and Johannesburg upwards of a thousand miles from Cape Town, while the State Railway extends another thousand miles through Rhodesia to the Victoria Falls and on to Broken Hill. Even where places are connected by railways the rate of travel is slow, viz., from 12 to 15 miles per hour, and by the quickest trains only a little over 20 miles per hour. Yet, although there are next to no tunnels in South Africa and but few bridges, the pace cannot be greatly increased because of the steep gradients and the narrow gauge of only 3½ feet. Great consideration is, however, given to the providing for the comfort of passengers on the long journeys, both as regards food in the restaurant cars and also as to the sleeping-car accommodation, the charges for which compare favourably with the ordinary cost of living at hotels in South Africa.

The extension and linking up of the railway system since the termination of the war have greatly helped to open up the country for commerce. There are not only through-passenger trains but also through-transit for goods in every direction, notably to the seaports of Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, and the Cape, as well as to Delagoa Bay and Beira. Further, exceptionally low through-rates to over-sea destinations have been fixed by the Government, in order to promote to the fullest extent the expeditious and cheap export of the products of the soil.

A Field for Science.—Whether in connection with the development of viticulture or of other agricultural industries, no part of the world seems so likely to benefit by advanced science in the future as South Africa. At all the Government farms there is grown almost every variety of tree that is suited to the soils of the four Colonies, including both those producing fruits for consumption, fresh, and those yielding the descriptions which can be most successfully preserved. All sorts of seeds are also requisitioned from every country, including maize (or "mealies," as it is called in South Africa) of the beautiful white kinds, and of the black descriptions from Mexico, together with the large, medium, and small sizes of the many yellow varieties. Yet these splendid educational institutions spreading knowledge to many thousands are maintained, thanks to the income from the sales of seeds, plants, trees, livestock, &c., at quite a small annual expense to the State Government—the one at Grootvlei, in the Orange Free State, comprising 2,500 acres, costing only a little over £1,000 per annum.

Examples of Scientific Achievement.—To illustrate what science has already accomplished and may yet accomplish for South Africa and elsewhere, I might call attention to the recent important discovery of a process whereby even the refuse from the gold mines, which hitherto had been looked upon as only an incumbrance, is now turned to profitable account. Chemical investigation disclosed that, amongst other products, unlimited quantities of sulphuric acid could be obtained from the iron pyrites in the waste, and, consequently, a company has been formed, and a large establishment erected a few miles from Johannesburg, under the supervision of a strong committee of scientific experts, in order to utilise this valuable residual. Sulphuric acid is largely used in the production of dynamite for the mines, and also for many other purposes. The raw material for its production is thus immediately to hand, and will necessarily continue to be so for many years. There is every prospect therefore of Lord Beaconsfield's sage remark, " that the industrial prosperity of a nation may be estimated by its consumption of sulphuric acid," being put to the test. In the utilisation of this refuse, of which the traveller sees so many evidences in the shape of mountainous heaps around Johannesburg, it was also found that a considerable quantity of gold still remained unextracted. The proprietors of these chemical works recover this gold in the course of their operations, and part of their contract is to return to the original proprietors of the refuse 85 per cent. of the gold so recovered, the balance of the value being retained as payment for the cost of extraction.

Government Exhibits.—In order usefully to inform and instruct the cultivators of the land, the Governments have instituted a system of exhibiting at all the Agricultural Shows of each Colony those seeds and plants best adapted to the different soils, as well as various suitable breeds of poultry. Approved seeds, plants, and eggs are sold to the farmers at nominal prices, while sires of many of the noted breeds of horses and cattle are, in many parts of the country, placed at a convenient distance for

the use of agriculturists. Specimens of the best breeds and cross-breeds of sheep are also kept, in order to show what varieties are most suitable for the production of wool and meat.

Dairies and Creameries.—Dairy farms and creameries are being established by the Governments in different parts of the Colonies, which, as soon as they become self-supporting, are handed over to responsible persons or companies so that they may be carried on under private enterprise.

At the Creamery at Tweespruit, in the Orange River Colony, originally established by the Government and now transferred to a limited liability Company, the cream from the districts many miles around is collected, and at certain seasons as much as 3,000 lbs. in weight of butter is made daily in the central establishment, which possesses all the most up-to-date scientific machinery and cold-storage installations.

Silkworm Industry.—The silkworm industry is now receiving careful attention from nearly all the South African Governments, and a comparison with the successful efforts which have been made in Italy (which country has of late taken a leading position for the high quality of silk produced), shows clearly that there is great scope in South Africa for competing with the world in this important branch of commerce.

Bee-keeping.—The bee industry, entirely neglected until the last year or two, is now a subject of study at the Government Experimental Stations. Most of the farms more recently taken are equipped with all the latest methods necessary to the successful bee-master, and the increasing quantity of honey stored in each successive season shows that the climate of South Africa is peculiarly suitable for its production.

Tobacco-culture.—The cultivation of the tobacco plant has made rapid strides since the war, and it is confidently believed that not only will South Africa eventually be able to provide for all her own requirements, but that she may become a large exporter of special varieties of tobacco-leaf. The Transvaal Government have recently engaged from America a number of experts who are not only versed in the growing of the best varieties but are also experienced in the drying and preparing of the leaf and its manipulation for use as pipe-tobacco, cigarettes, or cigars.

Export of Maize.—The growth of maize (or mealies) has received more attention in South Africa than perhaps any other crop, and it is now well known that with favourable freights it can be exported at a profit to the grower. The Government, through the railways, have made great sacrifices, so that maize can be delivered in Southampton or other English ports in 200 lb. bags at 10*s.* per ton, and the Union Castle Line have made generous efforts to assist them. General de Wet told me that the Government were willing to give English shipping companies the preference where freights are the same. This is all that can be expected, yet there is still a fear of maize having to be delivered in England by foreign steamers owing to their lower freights.

It is, however, encouraging to know that no less than some 150,000 tons of maize will be exported from South Africa during the present year, with every prospect, according to the particulars in the hands of the Government, that the quantity will be increased threefold in the next five years.

Although maize of numerous varieties is now produced in South Africa, a large white sort known as "Hickory King" seems to be the favourite even with the Kaffirs, so no doubt it will be the description grown in the future, as fresh proof of its utility for both black and white peoples is being found day by day.

Ostrich Farming.—The ostrich-feather trade is not only increasing throughout Cape Colony but is extending to many other parts of South Africa. Each year shows how ostriches can more profitably be bred and reared, and the export trade in feathers is continually growing. On the steamer by which I returned to England, upwards of £100,000 worth of feathers were shipped from Port Elizabeth and Mossel Bay.

Rubber.—I may mention that among other important articles of cultivation rubber is now receiving considerable attention in Zululand by the Natal Government, and also in Rhodesia, and many efforts are being made to compete in the production of this increasingly indispensable article. A large amount of capital has been invested in forming plantations and in introducing the most up-to-date system of collecting, preserving, and forwarding, with every prospect of success.

Tea, Coffee, and Sugar.—These three now indispensable adjuncts to the meals of poor and rich alike are being produced in increasing quantities within the limits of the Union, while the soil of Rhodesia in various parts would seem to favour the same spread of production. Natal produces all three, and it has been said that what Natal produces to-day Rhodesia will produce to-morrow. Cane sugar, with its usual residual product, rum, is largely made in Natal, and sugar cane is also being grown in North Rhodesia, where they are carrying out the methods which have already been successful in Natal and the Portuguese territory around Beira. Coffee is being successfully grown in the Transvaal.

Cereals, &c.—Notwithstanding the tropical climate of portions of the South African littoral, the temperature in many parts of the interior is suitable to the growth of various cereals which reach perfection mostly in temperate zones. This is owing to the great altitude of the table lands, which, in some parts of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal, are from 4,000 to 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. Some of the higher mountains are frequently covered with snow, which greatly assists irrigation.

It would seem, therefore, that in this favoured land there is the right soil and also the right climate for almost every variety of corn, vegetable, and fruit, and for every description of tree, and few seeds or plants for agriculture or horticulture have been introduced which have not found a suitable habitat for their growth.

The Wattle Tree in Natal.—One special and valuable product of Natal is the Wattle tree, an importation from Australia, the bark of which is so useful for tanning. The country is now being covered with plantations of this tree, much to the beautifying of the scenery; but what is of far more importance is that large tracts of land which were formerly only worth £1 per acre now realise £5 per acre, entirely owing to this branch of arboriculture.

The Price of Land.—In the Orange River Colony and in Rhodesia, however, land suitable for nearly all branches of agriculture, not far from towns, and only a few miles from railways, with water obtainable (but requiring storage), is still, I am told, to be had from about £1 per acre. In proof of this I may mention that adjoining the Government Experimental Farm at Grootvlei some 10,000 acres of land equally good were sold during the present year for £10,000, and this within only five miles of Bloemfontein.

Minerals.—As regards mineral wealth, not only are gold and diamonds found, but silver, copper, lead, and, above all, coal is being mined increasingly, Natal now supplying to the home-bound steamers the fuel which was formerly obtained from Scotland and Wales.

Future Development.—Under the Union, no doubt, more effective stimulus will be given to the development of the resources of every individual part of South Africa. Though it be true of the past that everything was subsidiary to the great question of gold and diamonds—particularly around Johannesburg and Kimberley—I am convinced that under the future Parliament other interests will receive due consideration through the influence of representatives drawn from all parts of the country, and every industry likely to be of lasting benefit to the community of the great South African Union will have a fair chance of expansion. Under the Union, too, consideration will everywhere be given to the important question of primary, secondary, and scientific education, while by the active co-operation of all the Colonies the spread of insect and other pests will be appreciably restricted.

Natural Advantages and Drawbacks.—Nature seems to have bountifully showered her gifts on South Africa, but at the same time to have placed drawbacks in the way of their easy utilisation. By the aid of science, however, the barriers to progress are now being slowly but surely broken down, and remedies for many ills are being brought within reach of those who diligently seek for them. An example of this is the breaking down of the primitive prejudices of the older race of Dutch farmers, who, for example, in their innocence thought it was wrong to try to exterminate insect pests such as locusts, because they would not have been there except God had willed it.

It would seem as if the many visitations to which South Africa has been subject—viz., war, drought, torrential rains, hailstorms, animal diseases, and insect pests—will only stimulate the people to rise to a loftier eminence of industrial achievement.

The land has never appeared at any previous period so free from these devastating influences as it is to-day, and science seems likely to banish altogether, or keep in check, rinderpest, East Coast fever, red-water, tick fever, and gall-sickness amongst cattle; scab, heart-water, fluke, and wireworm amongst sheep; horse-sickness, fly, and bots amongst horses; the insect pests of locusts, mosquitos (the source of malaria), and tick. As a consequence of these evils being practically cleared out of the way, there would appear to be a prosperous future for all who may seek an agricultural home in South Africa.

Imperial Intercommunication.—I cannot help feeling that circumstances demand a closer touch and more constant sympathetic intercommunication between the Board of Agriculture at home and the Government Departments of Agriculture in South Africa, as well as of all the Colonies and Dependencies of the British Empire. I think that we of the Mother Country have something to learn from the Colonies, as the Colonies have to learn from us. By means of more frequent intercourse not only should we acquire a great deal of useful information as to the suitability of seeds and plants for the different soils and climates of the Empire, but we should be in a better position to encourage large interchange of products of the soil of all parts of His Majesty's dominions.

At the same time, through ignorance of the wants of the people of our Colonies, there is being lost to the Mother Country much trade which goes to merchants in foreign countries, entirely owing to their greater enterprise in acquiring a knowledge of the Colonial requirements, both as to the goods themselves and the packing which, in the case of plants, seeds, fresh and preserved fruit, and eggs, has become quite a fine art with some of the Continental nations.

Packing of Goods.—I was told more than once in my travels through the different Colonies of South Africa, that while they have the greatest confidence in English seeds, yet in many instances the orders for plants and trees go to France or other parts of the Continent of Europe, because one can be pretty sure that all the details of packing this class of goods will receive more careful attention than in England. On the other hand, it is fair to mention that I have been frequently told that when articles of machinery, and, indeed, all sorts of ironwork are required of a substantial and lasting nature, such as have to stand wear and tear, it is to Great Britain they look.

The question of packing her own goods will be of paramount importance to South Africa in the future, as there is no doubt that, with the improved methods of cold storage and acceleration of transport, large quantities of fresh and preserved fruit, grapes, raisins, plums, peaches, apples, pears, oranges, bananas, pineapples, and much other fruit for which the soils and climate of South Africa are peculiarly suitable, will be shipped to Europe in enormous quantities. Europe's summer being the Cape's winter the productive ... the respective countries, and this ... on, as, with proper care in packing ... be exported from the Cape when th...

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Fresh and Preserved Fruit.—The preserved fruit industry will, in the future, become one of the most valuable assets of South Africa. The possibilities of growth for this purpose are almost limitless, and, with a lesser initial cost of production, South African dried fruits should be able to compete successfully with those from any other source. The same remarks apply in an equal measure to fresh fruit, almost every variety of which can be grown under the most favourable conditions in one or other of the South African States, and all these fruits, both dried and green, will be arriving in England and Europe at a period when those from the Mediterranean and nearer countries are out of season.

The fruit industry in Cape Colony, for example, has of late made great progress, and there are many vineyard proprietors who now have their fruit orchards as well as their vineyards. There are several large fruit farms in the Stellenbosch and Paarl districts, about 30 or 40 miles from Cape Town, some of which belong to the Rhodes Trust Companies, who were among the pioneers of this branch of commerce. On these estates many varieties of fruit are grown besides grapes, which latter are sold for home consumption or are exported in their natural state, while ever-increasing quantities are being preserved as raisins. The varieties of grapes required for this purpose are quite different from those used for wine-making, and this trade in raisins is one which promises, in the future, to become quite as important as, if not more important than, the production and sale of wine.

Pineapples.—To take one fruit alone, viz., the pineapple, which was exported for the first time in 1906, when 70 cases left Cape Colony; the shipments increasing to 494 cases in 1907, and 2,440 cases in 1908. From information which has reached me, I understand this year the quantity will be more than double that of 1908.

The larger portion of pines already shipped were sold on the London market at very remunerative prices—particularly those that were packed on the most approved principle.

South African National Union.—During the past two or three years the strongest desire has manifested itself throughout South Africa to extend commercial relations with all other parts of the British Empire, as an effective means of ensuring greater prosperity, as well as permanent goodwill between South Africa and the Mother Country.

To this end a society has been formed, under the name of the South African National Union, with headquarters at Cape Town, and centres in all the other principal towns of South Africa, including Port Elizabeth, East London, and Mafeking in Cape Colony; Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State; Pretoria and Johannesburg in the Transvaal; Pietermaritzburg and Durban in Natal; and Bulawayo and Salisbury in Rhodesia.

The Committee in South Africa consists of members elected from among all parties, the Hon. F. S. Malan being the President, and Captain Sir Pieter van Bam the Chairman; while a strong Committee in the United Kingdom, with an office in London, has now been formed, with Lord St. Aldwyn as President.

The objects of this society are to promote a spirit of patriotic unity between the United Kingdom and South Africa; to disseminate knowledge throughout the United Kingdom with regard to the resources of South Africa; to procure special information for merchants in the United Kingdom regarding the South African markets, and to impart the like information to merchants in South Africa as to British markets; to encourage suitable emigration to South Africa, and to extend that country's reputation as a field for the extension of British commerce, and as a pleasure and health resort.

Exhibition in Cape Town.—Under the auspices of the South African National Union it has been arranged to hold in Cape Town, at the time of the first sitting there of the Union Parliament, an exhibition to display the products of every part of South Africa. The project is receiving the financial support of the four States and Rhodesia, and the principal commercial men throughout the country are eagerly co-operating in promoting its success.

Encouragement for Producers.—At this new birth of British South Africa—viz., its Unification—I think it is important that the greatest encouragement should be given to farmers to produce the best of every breed of animal—horse, cattle, sheep, or pig—and the choicest variety of wool, cotton, corn, or fruit; and as we at home are so deeply interested in the extension of agriculture in every part of the Empire, I would suggest that prizes should be offered by the State concerned at every exhibition that is held, not only in South Africa, but in every part of Great or Greater Britain. Nothing is so well calculated to promote healthy rivalry among farmers and other producers as to give prizes which are appraised at a hundred times their intrinsic value.

His Majesty's Example.—I was informed that some few years ago, in accordance with his wise custom at home, His Majesty graciously expressed his willingness to offer a prize challenge cup for the best merino ram exhibited at the great Bloemfontein Show, where the principal exhibition of wool-producing sheep annually takes place. Sheep from all the States of the Union being eligible to compete, I cannot conceive a step better calculated to give encouragement to the all-important industry of wool-production throughout the whole of South Africa. It was thought, with perhaps some little reason, that this gracious offer of His Majesty might necessitate many prizes being given to other branches of agriculture in other Colonies and dependencies besides South Africa. Is there, however, a wiser or more economical course, while we give no preference to goods from our Colonies, than for the Government of His Majesty to encourage the cultivation of the best variety of every animal or vegetable product by offering prizes in each Colony and Dependency of the Empire? This, indirectly, must render great benefit to the nation by inciting the farmer, the manufacturer, and the financier to apply brains, capital, and land to produce all that is best for the use of the world.

An Imperial Advisory Committee.—The development in the agriculture of South Africa is, I believe, only in keeping with what is being effected in other British dominions. Canada and

Australasia are being rapidly opened up and reclaimed for agricultural uses, and whether or not the time has come, or is near at hand, when the Empire can be self-supporting in the prime necessaries of life, the resources of British territory are sufficiently important to receive special consideration at the hands of the Imperial as well as of the Colonial Governments. It seems to me that something might be done in the way of instituting an Agricultural Advisory Committee for the whole Empire, with headquarters in London, in order that the material interests of the producing countries might be extended, consolidated, and improved, and the security of the Empire strengthened. There is much important work that a properly constituted body of the kind could undertake both for the good of the producers and the enlightenment of the Governments as to the precise position of the Empire's producing capabilities and achievements.

Colonial Visitors and British Societies.—In South Africa, as in our other Colonies, there is a considerable, and, it is believed, a growing, market for pedigree live stock. The results of the breeding enterprises at the Government farms in the four Colonies have been so highly appreciated that the stock distributed from the centre is doing important pioneer work in opening up fresh territory for pure-bred cattle, sheep, and pigs. The desirability for nursing this profitable demand for British stock is obvious. It is natural to expect that this country should be looked to mainly to supply the animals requisite for the grading up of the studs, herds, and flocks of the African Colonies, but everything possible should be done to attract representative stock-owners to Great Britain, as I believe that still more important business could be cultivated. With the object of encouraging and facilitating commercial intercourse between the Mother Country and the Colonies, I would suggest that our agricultural and breed societies at home should make visitors from our dominions abroad, who are leading officials—such as managers, secretaries, and superintendents of Colonial societies—honorary members, not only for the time of their visit to England, but also during their term of office, for by this means our visitors would be brought directly into touch with the breeders of the United Kingdom of the classes of animals needed in the Colonies. Such a proceeding would be an acceptable act of courtesy to our friends from our rising Possessions abroad, and, at the same time, be instrumental in promoting and retaining trade within the Empire.

Sea Freights for Cattle.—A formidable barrier to the extension of trade between the United Kingdom and the British Colonies, particularly as regards the exchange of live stock, is the almost prohibitive price charged for the conveyance of cattle from England. For instance, animals at the present time are carried from Canada to the Cape, or Australia to the Cape, for something like one-third, or even one-fourth, of the charge for transport of the same class of animal from Great Britain to South Africa. This must mean an annual loss of a large amount of business for our British stock breeders, for in some instances the cost of the animal is doubled by the excessive charge for freight.

Cheapening of Communication.—The greatest immediate need in relation to the enormous territory of South Africa being an increased white population to occupy and develop the land, it becomes the more necessary, as a preliminary step, to encourage all classes of visitors from every part of the Empire to visit the unified South African Colonies. It is consequently of first-class importance that the shipping communication should be, as far as possible, accelerated and cheapened. Even if the reduction of the present journey of seventeen days from home could be reduced to a fortnight so as to bring the journey out and back within the total period of a month, the advantage would be great in giving so many more of the populations of these islands the possibility of a sight of the Empire's patrimony in Africa.

The cheapening of the cost of cable messages should also be at once pressed upon the Home and Colonial Governments as affording a means as potent as any that could be devised for extending commerce and agriculture and thereby hastening the peopling of South Africa.

These two benefits, of acceleration of passenger transit and reduced cable charges, added to that of the cheap postage which we now so fully enjoy, would do much directly or indirectly to familiarise would-be emigrants with the facts and features of South Africa's possibilities as a desirable home for the British race.

Encouraging suitable Immigrants.—How to promote emigration to South Africa will, as soon as the Union is a *fait accompli*, become one of the most urgent of the problems demanding solution. It is common knowledge that the right class of white-man labour for any purpose whatsoever has always been difficult to obtain for South Africa, owing to the fact already alluded to, that hitherto the mining industries have obscured the agricultural attractions of South Africa in the eyes of most of the immigrants from the United Kingdom and other countries. Consequently, the influx from all quarters has in the past been of little importance to agriculture, as most of those coming to the Colonies kept prominently in view a more or less speedy return to their native land. It is felt that those having the future of South Africa at heart must give greater attention to the encouragement of a different class of emigrants, and upon the results of their efforts in this direction will depend largely the success of the schemes designed for the fuller and better utilisation of the land in the production of food for home consumption or export. It seems to me that, in order to develop the vast agricultural resources of these great countries which will constitute the Union of South Africa, it would be wise, in the first instance, to encourage emigration of those in the Motherland who have from their earliest days been associated with some form of agriculture. Many of the sons in the class of yeoman farmers, who have been brought up for a career which seems to be no longer open to them in England, owing to the changed conditions of agriculture, would, to my mind, make the most suitable occupiers of farms in South Africa. Where such young men, who will usually have had the advantage of a fairly good

education, can command from their own circle even a limited amount of money as a guarantee of good faith, they might well be assisted by a *joint loan from our Home Government* and the Government of the particular Colony to which they go—and this applies as a proposition to all other Colonies—as the surest means of fixing them upon the soil and getting them to look upon their new abode as their permanent home. In addition to this, large amounts might be safely advanced for the purchase of land by such approved settlers on the security of the property itself, with easy terms of repayment, so that, with a small amount of capital of their own to start with, they might, within a comparatively short time, become considerable landowners. As a further guarantee of these emigrants being suitable for such a career in the Colony, the passing of a preliminary examination in the theory and scientific practice of agriculture might well be demanded. The selection of the most promising agricultural emigrants and the carrying out of the details might well be entrusted to our County Councils. If the way to success were thus made smoother for qualified pioneers, there would be many *others ready to emigrate* who would require *no pecuniary* help from the Government. Every practical agriculturist successfully settled on a farm would not only attract others as occupiers of farms, but would ensure in the natural course of things many followers of both sexes—farm hands, artisans who have to do with farming implements, and domestic servants—to fill other and humbler positions in life.

Conclusion.—South Africa has, to start with, the inestimable advantage of forming part of the British Dominions. Fear of foreign or internecine warfare will happily, to a large extent, be set at rest by the Act of Union of the Colonies now on the eve of consummation. The soils and climate are all round equal, if not superior, for cultivation to those of almost any other part of the globe. Water can be obtained in sufficient abundance either by boring or by storage, or, failing an ample supply of water, cultivation may flourish by the aid of dry farming, and land can be secured at very low prices.

The financial prospects of South Africa under the Union promise to be eminently favourable, for, notwithstanding all that has been done to further agriculture and otherwise develop the country since the war, as much as 90 millions of the future unified debt of the four Colonies, out of a total of 109 millions sterling, represents productive capital invested in the harbours and railways of South Africa. Nearly all of the latter are owned by the respective Governments, and therefore belong to, and will fructify for the benefit of, the taxpayer.

With all these advantages and the assistance of the local Governments in acquiring the necessary knowledge of agriculture there can be no doubt that those who embark in this, the first of industries, will have ample opportunities of gaining a sure and pleasant livelihood for themselves and their families; and the British Government should consider the advisability of offering facilities and encouragement to suitable would-be settlers to migrate to South Africa where such hopeful chances of success await them.

Those who have not seen with their own eyes, as I have, the promise of great things in South Africa, and even those who have been waiting long for the fulfilment of that promise on the spot, may think my forecast of the future too optimistic. I have, however, not penned my Report without careful weighing of the conditions and facts which are there co-operating to bring about a rapid progress both in agriculture and commerce. It is chiefly the giant strides which applied science has made all over the World, which incline me to that optimism, and embolden me to say that of all the British Colonial Possessions, United South Africa is the portion where the application of science in developing her numerous natural advantages of soil and climate will best come into play, in contradistinction to those parts of our Dominions where the problem rather is to overcome than to foster the forces of nature. The growing resources of science, conjoined with the improved political prospect, form a combination which, to my mind, justifies to the utmost my forecast of ultimate prosperity.

I am, My Lord,

Your obedient Servant,

BLYTH.

To the Right Honourable
The Earl of Crewe, K.G.,
His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies.

COPY OF LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE HON. JOHN X. MERRIMAN, PREMIER OF CAPE COLONY, BY LORD BLYTH, ON VITICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

I must preface my notes on the Cape wine industry by stating that when I was paid the compliment of being asked to visit South Africa and confer with the members of the Government on viticulture, I had no knowledge of the large accumulations of stocks of wine that existed in the Colony, and it was only on landing in Cape Town, on the 13th April last, that I was made aware of the agitation that was then taking place throughout the wine-growing districts, and of the meeting of the farmers which was to be held on the day following my arrival.

I was simply under the impression that, in view of the possible early unification of South Africa, the Government were wisely anticipating the development of all the resources of the Colony, and amongst them the wine industry, which, notwithstanding the undoubted suitability of the soil and climate for the cultivation of the grape, had, I imagined, been somewhat neglected of late, seeing that practically no Cape wines had been exported to the United Kingdom for many years past.

Had there been no immediate difficulties to meet in the shape of the large surplus stocks of Colonial wines and brandies now in

the hands of the farmers or the Government, for which there are so few outlets at the present moment in any part of the world, I cannot but feel that my experience of fifty years in the European wine business, together with my knowledge of the Cape wine trade in England previous to the equalisation of duties in 1860, might have been of more service to the Government than they can possibly be at this critical juncture.

During my visits to the various wine-growing districts of Cape Colony I have seen no reason for changing the opinion I formed the first few days I was in Cape Town, viz., that natural wines, both white and red, can be produced in many localities of a sufficiently good quality to satisfy the wants of a large proportion of the wine-drinking population of South Africa, and also that there is a prospect of a limited quantity of wines of the port wine type (Pontac) being exported for consumption to other parts of Europe.

As is the case, however, with nearly every wine-producing country, it is the home market that must be looked to as the outlet for the bulk of the wine produced in South Africa.

Of the 1,250 million gallons of wine produced in France annually, only 4 per cent., or one twenty-fifth part, is exported to all other countries of the world, and even a smaller proportion is exported from Italy, the second largest wine-producing country.

It is therefore manifestly of far greater importance to turn attention to the encouragement of the consumption of wines at home than abroad, and not only to see that they are produced under the most favourable conditions, but also that they are thoroughly matured in cask and bottle, so that they reach the consumer in the highest state of perfection.

In former times, when Cape wines were no doubt all more or less fortified with brandy at or soon after the vintage, as in Spain and Portugal, the same careful attention was not required as it would be when they are kept quite natural, as at the present time.

Cool underground cellars are as essential as the grapes themselves for producing light wines of high quality, and this will be recognised if one bears in mind that while the "Lodges" of Portugal and the "Bodegas" of Spain are all above ground, one rarely sees the light natural clarets and Burgundies of France nor the Hocks and Moselles of Germany stored above ground, except for a short period after the pressing of the grapes, but in cool underground cellars where the temperature is low and never varies between summer and winter.

And, if we except Australia—which has of late supplied the United Kingdom with a certain quantity of natural wine, but at a comparatively high strength of alcohol—no country has successfully supplied us with natural light beverage wines save France and Germany.

Although Italy produces some seven hundred million gallons of wine annually so close to our own shores, the consumption of Italian wines with us is infinitesimally small, much as they are appreciated by Englishmen in the country of their production.

The more I reflect on the wine industry of Cape Colony the more certain I feel that with the Orange River Colony, the Transvaal, Natal and Rhodesia forming one large and prosperous country, the Cape wine trade, if conducted on sound commercial principles and wisely supported by the Government, will be far more responsive to any assistance given for its development at home than if tenfold the sacrifice were made to establish a wine trade abroad. At the same time I do not wish altogether to discourage an attempt being made to reintroduce Cape wines into the United Kingdom, and also to obtain a footing in other non-wine-producing parts of the British Empire, particularly as I have reason to believe that some of the Cape wines have special health-giving qualities that the wines of other countries do not possess, and if I could assist to bring about so desirable a result as even a small demand for Cape wines in England it would be a real pleasure and labour of love to me.

I should perhaps add that I commenced my commercial career at a time when there was an important sale of Cape wines in England, and, with my relatives, took part in their introduction and distribution to the British public, and I should indeed be proud if I could in any way assist in the revival of the trade.

As neither Cape wines nor Cape brandies have been before the British public for many years, I am most anxious that none should be shipped to England but such as are of the best specimens of the country, and perfectly fermented, and in the best condition for early consumption after arrival. It would injure the Cape wine and brandy trade for another generation if either wines or brandies which did not bear a favourable comparison with similar descriptions of wines and spirits produced in Europe—which, unfortunately for South Africa, were never produced so bountifully, or at such low prices, as at the present time—were shipped to the United Kingdom.

I have seen with pleasure the many wineries that have been erected in Cape Colony during the last few years, and although I do not doubt that they have been the means of a far better quality of wine being produced than that which the small wine farmers would have been likely to make themselves, I nevertheless feel that the wine itself coming from these wineries cannot be of the highest class, but should rather be considered the ordinary, though pure, beverage wine of the country. There cannot reasonably be the careful selection of grapes picked at the exact moment of ripeness that go to these wineries, the desire of the farmer being naturally to produce quantity rather than quality. I am inclined to think, therefore, that the superior wines will always be made on the estates where the grapes are not only gathered and pressed, but where the wine is retained until such time as the fermentation is complete, and, better still, if stored there in cool underground cellars until thoroughly matured and ready for shipment and bottling. Failing this great guarantee of excellence, I have no doubt that the wineries system is the next best method of procuring average good quality.

Assuming that you can insure average good quality of natural beverage wines, thoroughly matured and fit for consumption, the

next question of importance is the distribution, and here I think the Government can render greater assistance even than in providing capital for the erection of wineries.

The first cost of the wines produced in Cape Colony, judging by the value of the grapes at the present time as throughout Europe, is little more than the value of beer; but yet, owing to the limited sale, the price asked by the hotel proprietor or restaurateur is some three or four times that of malt liquors, and there is less cause for this disparity in the price, seeing that while the wine is free from duty—the grape being produced in the Colony—beer pays a tax because the barley and other ingredients are imported.

It seems to me that the future Government of the Union could render a great service to the wine industry of South Africa in setting an example by instituting a system whereby both red and white natural wines of good marketable quality and in perfect maturity for consumption could be obtained at all the railway stations and restaurant cars, or wherever the Government has jurisdiction, at a low fixed price per bottle, the same to bear the Government official stamp as a guarantee of genuineness. This would compel all other sources of supply to reduce their prices proportionately, which would, without doubt, lead to a large consumption of Colonial wines, and, at the same time, cause them to be favourably known by travellers in South Africa of every nationality.

From the meeting of the South African National Union at Kimberley, and from conversations I have had with representative men in different Colonies, I fear there is a strong-rooted objection to encouraging the consumption of wine amongst the inhabitants, and particularly amongst the coloured races. This is all owing to the want of knowledge that prevails amongst well-meaning people as to the great difference between "natural wines" and "fortified wines."

All our foremost British statesmen for the last half-century have recognised the great distinction between wines that only contain alcohol which has been generated in them by the conversion of the saccharine in the grape and the wines to which brandy has been added, and in France they are always designated by different names—viz., "Vin Naturel" and "Vin de Liqueur." It would, I believe, scarcely be possible for anybody, be he black or white, to become intoxicated by drinking natural wine, and all our great legislators, such as John Bright, Cobden, Disraeli, and Gladstone, have recognised its health-giving properties and availed themselves of every opportunity of advocating its consumption on the score of temperance.

There is no more sober nation than France, and yet, with a total population of forty millions, the average consumption per head is considerably over one hundred bottles of natural wine per annum, and the feeling prevails to-day more strongly than ever, both in France and England, that natural wines, rather than beer or any other stimulant, are indispensable to the health of those of sedentary habits.

In face of the many obstacles which beset the wine farmer in almost every wine-growing country, and the plethora of wine that

exists at the present time throughout Europe, I would suggest whether it would not be more profitable for the agriculturist of the future, not only in South Africa but in other grape-growing countries, to turn his attention to the cultivation of grapes for export in their natural state, or preserved as raisins, for which there is an ever-increasing demand in every part of the world. This trade in both fresh and preserved fruit has been brought to a high state of perfection in the south-east of Spain, and is fast becoming of more importance to the Spanish nation than the export of wines.

The obstacles to the export of wine from every country are increasing year by year, for not only are there heavy duties in Great Britain as well as in all foreign countries, but also heavy Excise licences which are frequently difficult if not impossible to obtain, and are, therefore, an ever-present barrier to the extension of the wine trade.

Another great barrier to the extension of trade in wines and spirits which is absent in all other branches of commerce is the common custom of charging a large fixed sum for an annual licence. If this licence tax could be fixed proportionately to the extent of the merchant's trade it would be more equitable to the merchant, whether his trade be large or small.

For the sale of pure natural wines only, the produce of Cape Colony, I would strongly recommend that a special licence be granted entirely apart from that issued in respect of fortified wines and of spirits, either home-made or imported, and that this special natural wine licence be obtainable by any applicant of known respectability at quite a nominal price or registration fee. This would be a further encouragement for merchants to trade in natural home-made wines only, and, in my opinion, nothing but good would result therefrom.

In conclusion, I should like to observe that, after many inquiries in my travels through the Cape Colony and neighbouring States, which I hope will soon constitute the South African Union, I see a much brighter future for all engaged in every branch of agriculture other than viticulture, and I trust, therefore, that a way may be found to give generous assistance to the wine farmers in their present plight, recognising as I do that the restrictive measures placed by successive Parliaments upon the wine and spirit industry have in no small degree been the cause of the painful position in which they find themselves placed.

BLYTH.

Cape Town,
June, 1909.